CHAPTER I

228 in private waters. Supplemented by some 4,000 tons of imported fish, this provided nearly 1 kg. (2·2 lb.) per head of population, but, in fact, almost all the fish was consumed by the 5 million persons living in towns. The principal fish caught were sturgeon, carp, pike, eels and crayfish. The main fishing centres being Braila, Tulcea and Ismail.

6. Food Industries

256 The chief food and agricultural-processing industries are milling, sugar manufacture, oilseed crushing and tobacco curing. While the milling industry was dispersed widely about the country in more than 15,000 small mills employing altogether over 37,000 persons (at 1930 census), the sugar industry was for the most part concentrated in the plain of the Old Kingdom. Of the 17 sugar factories employing 10,000 workers only one was in the Transylvanian districts lost to Hungary and five in the areas temporarily lost to the U.S.S.R.

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258 The vegetable-oil industry, located chiefly in Bessarabia, was only partly carried on in factories, of which there were (on January 1st, 1930) 117, employing 2,028 workers. Among these, 34 were fitted both to extract crude oil and to refine it, six were exclusively refineries, while the remainder produced only crude oil. The rest of the industry consisted of some 2,000 hand- or animal-driven presses mostly owned by individual peasants or by shopkeepers. These primitive presses extracted only a low percentage of oil from the seeds, and consequently the cake—mainly sold for export—had an unusually high oil content. As regards

277 tobacco, both curing and cigarette manufacture

[656] were subject to government licence and control. There were 29 factories (in 1930) employing 9,730 workers, but tobacco cultivation subsequently declined, so also doubtless did the numbers employed.

7. Agricultural Organization

452 The history of the organization of Rumanian

241 farmers is one of not too successful co-operatives

474 becoming transformed more and more into agencies for the execution of Government Control Schemes.

[654] For many years there had been throughout the country a network of agricultural credit societies, co-operative in form but in practice directed by the State. These played an important rôle during the period of the Land Reform in helping the peasants by advances to buy and equip their newly acquired holdings. There was even some co-operative cultivation for a time, until the new peasant-owners could muster sufficient draught animals and implements. Besides this, there have been strong local co-operative unions especially among the

[662] minority nationalities—the Hungarians in Transylvania, the Swabian and Saxon in the Banat and the Russian and Polish Jews in the Bucovina.

243 The credit societies revived in importance when

474 after 1933, the Rumanian Government began the

452 organization of grain marketing. They became

654 the local agents of a Central Marketing Board through which all sales of grain had to be made both for home consumption and for export. Whereas formerly grain prices slumped immediately after the harvest, most peasants, being obliged to sell their grain quickly, under the new scheme prices were stabilized throughout the year, and this brought a great improvement to peasants'

[651] receipts. But the scheme and the societies were also used to collect the peasants' taxes (paid in grain) which did not increase the popularity of co-operation.

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